

Meteor-Heraut

Published by the 80th Area Support Group

Volume 22, Number 23

Chièvres - Schinnen - Brussels

December 17, 2004

The Holiday Season in the Benelux

60 years ago and today

Pfc. Margerum from Philadelphia, Pa. walks a road through a peaceful forest in the Bastogne area as he returns Dec. 27, 1944 from the front lines.

*The rough road
through the
Ardennes*

PHOTO: U.S. National Archives

Karen Simmons flips the power switch for the tree lights helping Col. Dean Nowowiejski, 80th Area Support Group commander, welcome the holiday season Dec. 3 on Chièvres Air Base. See other holiday pictures on Page 8.

COMPOSITE PHOTO by Rick Haverinen

Quick Read

Belgium

Provide Christmas

Time of giving seeks hosts to invite single or unaccompanied service members to their home for a holiday meal. Contact MWR Community Recreation Div., DSN 361-5589. If you're a service member who would like to participate, give CRD a call.

Help Cookie Elves

ACS at NSA in Brussels seeks ingredients for "The Cookie Elves" who are giving holiday cookies and teddy bears to children at Leuven Hospital. The "Elves" also need helpers to wrap gifts. Info: 02 305-0918.

Netherlands and Germany

IACS registration hours

Beginning in January, the 254th Base Support Bn. Provost Marshal Office administration section and IACS registration will be closed daily, noon-1 p.m. IACS registration hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-noon, and 1-4 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-noon; and closed Saturday-Sunday. Info: Ben Dols, DSN 360-7322 or 31 46 443-7322.

Recalling holidays during WWII

The week between Christmas and New Year's Day is often thought of as a time of rest, reflection, and resolutions. For the U.S. Army Soldier fighting in the Ardennes in late 1944, it was a time few, if any, thought of as the holiday season. Faced with the best units the German Army could hurl at them, U.S. units had given ground to the German offensive known as the Battle of the Bulge. The cold and snow proved to just as dangerous as the enemy soldiers and tanks.

The following is a holiday chronology of the last week of 1944 in the Ardennes. Every American division was fighting a critical fight, but some seemed to stand out in importance for limiting the German advance and finally cutting off the Bulge at its base.

Dec. 25, 1944

Christmas Day, 1944, was a horrible day for many U.S. Soldiers fighting in the Ardennes. The 7th Armored Div. threw its tanks and infantrymen against German forces holding the vital crossroads of Manhay on the northwest tip of the expanding bulge reaching for the crossings on the Meuse River. Without control of Manhay, the German armored units could not expand to the north and west in their try to leap over the Meuse.

Task forces from the 30th Infantry Div., nicknamed "Old Hickory," finished their mission of eliminating the threat from a German armored force surrounded in La Gleize. The night before, the Germans abandoned their tanks and wounded and walked out toward their lines. The 30th Infantry Div. battalions kept up the fight to clear the Ambleve River area between Stavelot and Trois Ponts and stabi-



PHOTO: U.S. Army Signal Corps

A few Task Force Hogan troops who slipped through German lines at night during the Battle of the Bulge.

lized that part of the American front line.

In a parallel to the German force pinned in La Gleize, tankers and mechanized infantrymen of Task Force Hogan from the 3rd Armored Div. could not be resupplied with fuel. They had been pinned down in the village of Marcouray for several days. The commander decided that in order to save his men, he would abandon the vehicles and walk through Ger-

man lines. After destroying their equipment, the men infiltrated in small groups and reached American lines near the town of Soy. When questioned about his experience, Lt. Col. Samuel Hogan laconically replied "My feet hurt."

26th Infantry Div. attacks Eshdorf, Luxembourg, on the Sauer River. This attack was critical to cutting into the German southern flank. General George Patton's 3rd Army would execute this attack and cross over the Sauer. German units threatened by Patton from the south could not protect other Nazi units still trying to eliminate the 101st Airborne Div. enclave in Bastogne.

Combat Command B, 2nd Armored Div., secured many crossroads around the village of Celles to block the German advance to the Meuse at Dinant. This turned out to be the high-water mark for Germans trying to get over to the west side of the river. A powerful armored attack by the 2nd Armored Div. forced the German forces to sit in place and wait for more fuel.

Dec. 26, 1944

The 3rd Armored Div. took the essential cross roads of Grandmenil. This operation against Grandmenil was critical to sealing off the northwest shoulder of the Bulge. As with the nearby hamlet of Manhay, Grandmenil con-

See WWII on Page 4.



Col. Dean A. Nowowiejski
80th ASG Commander

Nowowiejski Notes

Since this is the last edition before Christmas, I would like to wish you again a very safe and happy holiday season. Please let me share some reminders that are on my mind.

Holiday Safety. Tailored products are available at <http://www.80asg.army.mil>, right side of the page. I would invite your particular attention to fire and food safety, cold weather injury prevention, and avoiding traveling when you are fatigued or under hazardous road conditions.

Battle of the Bulge 60th Anniversary. The big day is tomorrow in Bastogne, 18 Dec. There is an historical walk, a parade, a memorial, the commemorative throwing of the nuts, and a light show. Plus the King of Belgium will be there. Please remember that the actual battle was fought until January 1945. Check the left side of the web page. The 76th Army Band has been with us for the last several days, and their concerts continue into next week.

ID Cards. We lose an average of an ID card everyday across this Area Support Group. Because of the Force Protection risk, this is entirely unacceptable. Please take increased steps to know where your ID card or Installation Pass are at all times, and to

secure them. You can expect command policies in the near term that will increase the threshold of chain of command involvement in replacing lost ID cards, as well as make it a more difficult process, all in an effort to respond to the seriousness of the situation of a lost U.S. identification. It is not an insignificant matter to lose or to replace an ID card.

Utility Conservation. At this time of year, it is easy to waste energy. American tax dollars pay in Euros for the lights and heat you use in your offices and government quarters. With the dollar low and the Euro high, we are paying more than ever before for utilities. Beyond that, every dollar you save is a dollar that we can use to invest in the infrastructure where you live and work. If you would like to take your tax dollars and invest in better buildings, better government housing, better roads, plumbing, fire protection, and the like, then I ask you to do just two things this winter:

- Turn off the lights in rooms when no one is in them
- Turn down the heaters in rooms that are not normally occupied, and don't keep the heat in your office or government quarters set like outside Miami Beach.

Every dollar that we save this winter is a dollar that we can invest in the infrastructure where we live and work in the new calendar year.

Let holidays be time for renewal, not danger

Bell Send #8-05

9 December 2004

Holiday Season Safety

1. For many of us, the upcoming holiday season will be a time of joy and celebration with family and friends. For others, the holidays may be lonely or stressful. I ask you to take time over the next few weeks to think about USAREUR Soldiers and civilians who are deployed or are preparing to deploy in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Please reach out to those who need assistance, especially the families of deployed personnel and those who will be alone over the holidays. Most importantly, use this time to enjoy some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

2. As you relax this holiday season, do not to let down your guard. Our goal for the holiday season is zero fatalities. We can reach this goal by mitigating risks and using the chain of command to take care of people and maintain discipline throughout the holidays. The Holiday Safety and USAREUR Unit Safety Certification memorandum (available on the USAREUR homepage) lists areas of particular concern for commanders and first-line leaders. These include but are not limited to the following:

• **Excessive Alcohol Consumption.** The likelihood of alcohol-related incidents at this time of year is very high. The number of holi-

day functions increases the opportunities for drinking. In addition, many Soldiers returning from deployment will have an urge to consume alcohol. First-line leaders must remind Soldiers of the dangers of binge drinking, drinking too much, and drinking and driving. Those who plan to drink alcoholic beverages at holiday celebrations must ensure that they have a safe means to get home. Remember, a drunk-driving conviction can end a Soldier's career.

• **Vehicle Crashes.** Winter brings hazardous driving conditions (including black ice, fog, and snow) and fewer hours of daylight. These conditions, combined with roads crowded with holiday travelers, increase the likelihood of accidents. Driving too fast for road or weather conditions has caused or has been a factor in many car crashes, especially at this time of year. Those who will be traveling over the holidays should consider these factors when making their travel plans and ensure they allow themselves enough time to reach their destinations. First-line leaders must be actively engaged in the planning process by advising travelers to be prepared for bad

weather and to drive defensively. By becoming personally involved in discussing and planning off-duty activities with subordinates and conducting Under the Oak Tree counseling, we can help ensure Soldiers will be safe over the holidays.

• **Suicide and Domestic Violence.** This holiday period will be particularly demanding as USAREUR reconstitutes its forces, and Soldiers continue to deploy and redeploy.



Gen. B. B. Bell

The holidays may be lonely for those separated from their families. Others may be under stress and could resort to spouse abuse or domestic violence. Commanders and first-line leaders must know how to recognize depression and suicidal behavior and respond accordingly. They also must encourage those who feel stressed to seek help. Chaplains are available throughout the Army in Europe to help families deal with many problems; leaders and Soldiers should not hesitate to ask them for help if needed.

• **Home Fires.** Take fire prevention seriously this holiday season. Everyone should test his or her smoke alarm and rehearse emergency evacuation plans. Keep in mind that candles

are twice as likely to cause a residential fire in December as any other month. To avoid tragedy, ensure that candles and other holiday decorations, such as Christmas tree lights, do not pose a fire hazard.

• **Recreational Hazards.** Winter-sport activities such as skiing, sledding, and snowboarding increase the risk to our personnel, particularly those who are unaware of the hazards or who are not conditioned for the sport. Those who will be taking part in winter sports over the holidays should plan accordingly. They need to ensure they have the proper equipment, they need to take a lesson or two if they have never tried the sport before, and they need to ensure that everyone in their party is well informed of the dangers associated with the particular sport.

3. I am grateful for your sacrifices and dedicated service to our Nation. With your complete commitment and sincere concern for the welfare of each and every member of the USAREUR family, we can achieve our goal of zero fatalities this holiday season. I encourage you to enjoy the holiday break and I wish you a safe and happy holiday!

B. B. BELL
General, USA
Commanding

Army improves quality of life via AFAP conference

Bell Sends #7-05

29 November 2004

Army Family Action Plan Conference

1. The Army held its 21st Annual Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) Conference in November 2004. At the conference, 121 delegates discussed 96 complex, far-reaching Soldier and family-support issues vital to the well-being of the Army family, including entitlements, counseling services, employment, and family support. In addition, OCONUS commands were able to submit issues of critical concern directly to the AFAP program. USAREUR submitted the following two issues:

Funding for Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DODDS) Summer School for Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade. DODDS students should have the opportunity to attend summer school tuition-free.

Calculation of Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA) OCONUS. Housing and utility allowances from FSSA calculations should be eliminated.

2. The main theme of this year's conference continued to be personal financial concerns. Of the 96 new issues that were discussed (available at http://www.armycommunityservice.org/vacs_afap/home.asp), the top 5 were related to medical care, personal expenses, and leave. These issues (in priority order) are as follows:

Family Member Eyeglass Coverage. No eyeglass coverage exists under TRICARE for family members of active-duty Soldiers and retirees. Delegates recommended funding part of the cost for eyeglasses under TRICARE, outsourcing eyeglass fabrication through contracted vendors at a reduced price, and having military laboratories provide Frame of Choice Program services at cost.

Expiration of TRICARE Referral Authorizations. TRICARE automatically cancels the initial referral authorization when the beneficiary is unable to get an appointment with a specialty clinic or provider within the 28-day standard. Delegates recommended eliminating the automatic expiration of the initial TRICARE referral authorization.

Childcare Fee Category. Families with significantly different incomes are paying the same fee in each childcare category. Delegates recommended increasing the number of categories to reduce the financial variance within each category and increasing the number of fee ranges to reflect the new categories while maintaining existing fee-range parameters.

Calculation of CONUS Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA). Families stationed in CONUS generally do not qualify for FSSA because the calculation method includes basic allowance for housing (BAH). Delegates recommended eliminating BAH from income calculations for FSSA.

Leave Accrual. Increased mission requirements leave little opportunity for Soldiers to use accrued leave. Delegates recommended allowing Soldiers to carry up to 90 days of leave until their expiration term of service.

3. The concentration on financial concerns affected the emphasis given to previously submitted issues and those being worked. The top six active AFAP issues (in addition to those above) include—

Allowing Soldiers with 10 years of service to distribute their Montgomery GI Bill benefits to their family members. This was also priority #1 in 2003.

Giving "in-state tuition" status to family members attending school in a U.S. State while residing in that State

on military orders. This was priority #2 in 2003.

Amending the enlisted portion of the permanent-change-of-station weight-allowance table to more closely match officer weight-allowance authorizations. This was priority #4 in 2003.

Awarding household-goods moving contracts to companies based on company performance, claims history, and cost; and providing the full-replacement value for lost or damaged goods. This was priority #6 in 2003.

Providing authorizations and funding for all Army Community Service positions in support of well-being initiatives that support Army Community Service. This is a new issue.

Providing Reserve Component Soldiers on active duty full BAH after 30 days and paying Reserve Component Soldiers on active duty for over 140 days the full BAH from the first day of activation. This is a new issue.

4. The AFAP "grassroots" process has identified Soldier and family issues to senior leaders since 1983 and has raised over 525 issues that resulted in legislative or policy changes and improved programs and services. Your suggestions and involvement are critical to this process. I strongly encourage you to participate in the AFAP to help make our great Army even better. Contact your base support battalion for more details on the AFAP process.

B. B. BELL
General, USA
Commanding

Belgium, Netherlands citizens recall dark days



PHOTO: U.S. National Archives

Soldiers of the 7th Armored Div. advance along a road towards St. Vith in Belgium, retaken in the final liquidation of the Battle of the Bulge in early 1945.

Story and photos by Tom Larscheid

Nazi Germany's last-gasp surprise offensive in the west on Dec. 16, 1944, shook the Allies to the core. Although the front line bulged inward in the middle, it held on the shoulders, throwing off the attack timetable and allowing reinforcements to counterattack. The Germans were soundly defeated and by mid-January 1945 retreated across the German border leaving behind a trail of death and destruction.



Marcel Schmetz

The following are recollections of civilians who lived through the terrible anxiety and uncertainty of those desperate 30 days.

Village awash in jerry cans

Marcel Schmetz, Clermont, Belgium, recalled how a company of 1st Infantry Div. troops staying at his father's farm moved out so fast when the battle broke that they left much of their equipment behind.

"My parents were very scared when they left," Schmetz said. "I remember the sky was red because of all the artillery fire in the distance."

The GIs left early in the morning and it was pandemonium, according to Schmetz.

"They were making all kinds of noise and shouting as they grabbed their weapons, loaded up their jeeps and trucks and left. I know at least one was in our kitchen crying. There was no joy anymore."

Although only a few miles from the German border, Schmetz's parents never considered moving to a safer area.

"They didn't do it when the Germans invaded us in 1940," he said. "They knew that more people died on the streets during an evacuation than those who stayed home, so we did."

Schmetz's brother, who was in hiding during the Nazi occupation, had fake identity papers made by the resistance just in case the Germans returned. He could have been forcibly conscripted into the German army since that part of Belgium had been

incorporated into the Third Reich.

The villagers were not only concerned about the possibility of the Germans returning but also worried about a huge abandoned gas depot that literally surrounded them. A member of the resistance, Freddy Rousselle, biked to Clermont with an American officer who had orders to blow up the depot, taking the village with it.

"But when they arrived, they were met by the town hall secretary who pleaded with them not to do it because of all the civilians living there. So Freddy and the American stayed in the town hall watching for approaching Germans. They said they would blow up the village if one German soldier set foot in it. Fortunately they didn't make it."

GIs never returned

For Paul L.M. van Zwijndregt, Schinnen, the Netherlands, Dutch homes were always open for the American GI. His mother spent her young years in Heerlen where U.S. infantry and armor liberated the town on Sept. 17, 1944.

"Almost everyone and every family in Heerlen offered shelter and opened their doors to the Americans and later British troops," van Zwijndregt said. "My family tried as much as they could to make these guys feel at home."

In December rumors swept the streets that the Germans were coming back.

"There was much confusion in the city



Paul van Zwijndregt

as to what was going on in a big battle in what we sometimes called 'the backyard of Limburg,' the Belgian Ardennes," he said. "All the Americans billeted in my mother's house left immediately. If I recall correctly, the 258th Field Artillery Observation Bn., of which Battery B was massacred at Malmédy, was stationed in Heerlen before the battle."

Heerlen, van Zwijndregt noted, was a rest center for many units after the fighting stopped in September.

"There was great fear among the population that the Germans would take revenge on the Dutch people for the joy they showed as the U.S. powerhouse inflicted defeat after defeat on the Germans. But they never came back, thanks to all the guys who fought in the battle in the Ardennes. Sadly enough, most of the men that lived with my grandparents and my mother never returned again," van Zwijndregt said.

Although Heerlen was spared a return of brutal Nazi occupation, the Germans remained firmly in control in Holland north of the rivers Rhine and Maas until May 1945.

"It was a very difficult situation. There was nothing to eat and people were starving in the streets," van Zwijndregt said. "They were finally liberated by the Canadians, British and Poles. Let me tell you this, my parents never forgot their liberation."

Saw one German

Eric Daniel, from Roisin, Belgium, remembers his father, François, telling him his adventures with American GIs as a 13-year-old.

François befriended a Maj. Harper at a U.S. Army depot in the town of Jemappes and would idle away the hours amid the massive quantities of war materiel.

"On Dec. 15 people in Mons were still happy about their liberation four months

earlier by the Americans, but the next day the battle started," Daniel said. "Harper had to go and the Americans were getting more nervous. The first Christmas after liberation was again filled with fear that the Germans were coming back."

Daniel noted that his former father-in-law, who lived on an isolated farm in the area of Saint Hubert where

some of the fiercest fighting took place in December 1944, claimed he saw only one German during four years of occupation.

"That was in 1943 and the German was in a truck 500 meters away. He said that was the first and last time he had ever seen a German. He never saw any Americans either throughout the Battle of the Bulge," he said. "Amazing."

Weren't told much

When the Battle of the Bulge began, Maurice Sperandieu, from Borgerhout, Belgium, was in the Saarland with Patton's Third Army preparing to break through the Siegfried Line. But Patton soon had his army pivot 90 degrees and head north to aid the hard-pressed American troops.

Sperandieu found himself doing close order drill on the town square of Luxembourg City.

"We did it in order to give some courage to the Luxembourg people," he said. "We thought it would show them our resolve by training in the streets."

Although rumors were rampant, hard information was hard to come by, according to Sperandieu.

"We didn't know much," the 78-year-old veteran said. "After the 16th it was chaos. We knew there was a breakthrough but what really happened we didn't know until much later."

Sperandieu said he initially worried about his parents living outside of Brussels

but the German attack was turned back far short of its Antwerp objective.

"I got a few letters from home and knew they were okay," he said. "Apart from the Ardennes, which was occupied for a very short time, there were no problems."

Stealing potatoes to survive

Cis Spook, who was born in the Netherlands and is now a Belgian citizen, recalled her father, Peter, living off the land for three years.



Eric Daniel

"I think it was in 1942 that he and his brother were ordered to report for 'voluntary' work in Germany. When he arrived at the train station, he decided he didn't want to go, but his brother wouldn't flee with him so he went by himself."

Peter found employment at a farm near IJsselmeer where he felt relatively safe as few German patrols ventured that far into the country. But after a year the farm was flooded and he was forced to find another cover.

"He wandered around for some time and upon the D-Day announcement, returned to Haarlem and hid in the house where his future wife, Theodora, lived. He thought it would only be a short while."

"During the night he and his future father-in-law would steal potatoes from the Germans. It was very risky and the Germans didn't hesitate to shoot those who were caught," she said.

Spook said her parents talked of the winter of 1944 and spring of 1945 as a cold, hungry time.

"I remember my parents saying that they were really starving, and they were always looking at how they could get more food. My sisters, my brother and I always had to eat all we were served for dinner or we would hear their story on how they would have liked to have had our food during that



Cis Spook

winter and how lucky we were that we didn't have to experience it. I now fully realize how lucky we have been indeed."

Larscheid is the previous editor of the Meteor-Heraut.



PHOTO: U.S. Army by Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson

Their holidays will look like this

Sixty years after World War II, U.S. troops have new equipment and uniforms and they're fighting in a different part of the world, but they're still on the front line protecting freedom the hard way during their holidays. 1st Class Mark Gallegos, of Co. C, 1st Bn., 24th Inf. Regt., 1st Bde., 25th Inf. Div., (Stryker Brigade Combat Team), points to the home he wants a squad to enter during Operation Jacksonville in Mosul, Iraq on Nov. 13. Operation Jacksonville is an operation in which 1-24 INF and the Iraqi National Guard are in search of anti-Iraqi forces. 1/25 INF (SBCT) are in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

WWII from Page 1.

trolled one of the few all-weather road junctions in that part of the Ardennes.

Combat Command Reserve of the 4th Armored Div. broke through the German ring encircling Bastogne. Mounted on Sherman tanks, the armored force was led by Lt. Col. Creighton Abrams, a future Chief of Staff of the Army and the Soldier for which the current U.S. Army M-1 tank is named. Desperate German attempts to close the road limited the breakthrough traffic to armored vehicles.

80th Infantry Div. crossed the Sauer River in Luxembourg at Eishdorf. On another part of the 3rd Army front, Staff Sgt. James R. Hendrix, 53rd Armored Infantry Bn., won the Medal of Honor in combat action near Assenois, Belgium.



Photo courtesy HomeOfHeroes.com

President Truman awards the Medal of Honor to Staff Sgt. James Hendrix.

Dec. 27, 1944

After several days of bitter fighting and trading the crossroads back and forth, the 7th Armored Div. captured Manhay for the final time. This ensured that the German forces could not enlarge the Bulge to the north and protect the tip of the Bulge that stretched toward the Meuse River at Dinant. It also greatly complicated the German effort to withdraw forces from that threatened area.

Supply vehicles from Combat Command Reserve, 4th Armored Div., rolled into Bastogne to lift the siege with deliveries of food, fuel, and ammunition. Infantry and tank teams from the 4th Armored Div. set about widening the supply road corridor coming into Bastogne from the southwest. Wounded men were evacuated along the same route by return traffic to hospitals in Neufchateau.

At the extreme southeastern shoulder of the Bulge the 4th Infantry Div. patrols moved into Echternach, Luxembourg. The Germans could expect that the Sauer River would offer them no security from the attacks from

the south by the 4th Infantry Div.

Dec. 28, 1944

The United States V Corps defeats the last major German effort to break through the Elsenborn Ridge. The 1st Infantry Div., 99th Infantry Div., and 2nd Infantry Div. all played major roles in defeating the German attempt to widen the northern shoulder of the Bulge. The offensive plans written by the German generals required them to be over the Elsenborn Ridge by Dec. 18, at the latest. The three U.S. infantry divisions held to the high ground and their supporting artillery smashed the German tanks attempting to push them off the ridge. The Germans acknowledged that the Elsenborn Ridge was too strong a position to take and shifted some of their best troops to other sectors.

The U.S. 83rd Infantry Div. pushed toward Rochefort. This division was relatively new to the front, but acquitted itself well in the bitter cold and combat.

Dec. 29, 1944

The VIII Corps prepares to drive toward Houffalize in order to make a link with other advancing forces and cut off the German Bulge and trap large numbers of German equipment and men. The weather had started clearing and allowed hundreds of air missions to be flown daily against German ground troops.

Dec. 30, 1944

German forces abandon Rochefort to 83rd Infantry Div., awarding the new division with its first major capture of a town. To compound the German misery, the VIII Corps began the attack on Houffalize.

Another relatively new unit, the 87th Infantry Div., takes Moiricy, and then loses it to German counter-attack. Before the war, this was a backwater village in the Ardennes forest, but over the next few days it would be a battleground of splintered trees and men.

The German 7th Army mounted a desperate attack against the 35th Infantry Div. south of Bastogne. The Germans hoped to cut the Arlon-Bastogne highway around Luttrebois. While the attack showed some initial success by isolating and capturing two infantry companies, it bogged down against U.S. resistance.



The 4th Armored Div. rolled into Bastogne Dec. 27 to deliver much-needed food, fuel and ammunition to beleaguered U.S. troops.

Dec. 31, 1944

III Corps Artillery opens fire on Wiltz, Luxembourg, supporting the assault against the Bulge from the south. 87th Inf. Div. takes Remagne and works to take back Moiricy. The Germans hold Luttrebois under attack from 35th Inf. Div.

Jan. 1, 1945

Operation Bodenplatte throws 800 German aircraft against U.S. airfields in Belgium, Holland and France. It is the last major German Luftwaffe air offensive of the war. U.S. and British fighter planes and anti-aircraft crews claimed about 300 German aircraft shot down.

The 87th Inf. Div., "Golden Acorns," captures Moiricy and Jenneville, shattering German hopes to secure the perimeter around St. Hubert and seal off U.S. advances.

From the now-relieved Bastogne, the 6th Armored Div. attacks to the east of the city and takes Neffe, Bizory, and Margeret.

Here are places to experience the history of the 60th Anniversary events: Bastogne - Mardasson Museum, Bastogne Historical Society; Wiltz and La Roche - Musée sur la Bataille des Ardennes; Diekirch, Luxembourg - Diekirch Historical Museum; Clervaux, Luxembourg - Chateau de Clervaux, Musée sur la Bataille des Ardennes; Thimister-Clermont, Remember Museum; La Gleize/Stoumont - December 1944 Historical Museum.



Tech. Sgt. John Pike



Tech. Sgt. John Jacob Pike, 1921-1961, 1st Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt., 2nd Inf. Div., sent home to his family this improvised 1944 Christmas card sketched on a napkin. "From somewhere in Germany," was operational security to not give away his exact location in case the letter might have fallen into enemy hands.

Christmas Eve Mass precursor to battle



U.S. Soldiers use charcoal to sign the soft clay walls of a cave outside of Maastricht Christmas Eve, 1944. The next day many of them were sent to fight in Bastogne.

By Ruud van Heel

On D-Day, June 6, 1944, the assault forces storm ashore at five points along the coast of Normandy, supported by a great armada and thousands of planes and paratroopers. Against fierce but ill-coordinated German resistance, they establish a beachhead. Within a few weeks a million troops are on French soil. Victory was assured but nobody knew that nearly a year of hard fighting still lay ahead.

By mid-September the Allies are fighting on the edge of Germany itself. The front now stretches from the Netherlands, along the borders of Belgium, Luxembourg and France, all the way to Switzerland. While General Eisenhower plans a general troop

advance toward Germany, the Nazis launch a counter attack on Dec. 16.

This is a plan by Hitler himself, aimed at the Allied center in the Ardennes Forest. The Germans hope to break through to the Belgian port of Antwerp, thereby splitting the Allied armies in two.

The Germans drive a salient about 50 miles into Belgium. This is the beginning of the "Battle of the Bulge," one of the most difficult and decisive battles during World War II. Soldiers fight for every tree and hill. Winter is coming with its freezing cold, howling winds and blanketing snow which will inevitably cover the bodies strewn throughout the fields.

Maastricht, December 24, 1944. Christ-

mas Eve. About 300 American soldiers gather in a small cave in the neighborhood of St. Pietersberg (St. Peter's Hill). Candlelight reflects their shadows on the marl walls. You can see a few bats hanging from the ceiling. The faces of the men are set and devout. The marl cave is a safe haven from the German Luftwaffe attacks - a safe place to celebrate Christmas. A Christmas that could be their last.

Chaplin Dobrzinsky, a priest from New York, will lead the Mass. Everybody is prepared. They know the Battle is raging on and any moment now they can be called to fight.

Mr. van Grinsven, a monk singing in the choir, was an eye-witness to that Christmas Eve gathering of 60 years ago.

"I remember when they fetched me in the cloister," van Grinsven said. "We had to sit in a jeep. The lights were covered and we could barely see the road. While we were driving, we heard the air raid alarm. I was afraid. We drove up that silent road on the hill that led to the cave. The soldiers were already present. They looked a little bit strange to me. Not the way I imagined them to be. I was surprised that these rough men could be so pious. The Mass was very moving. I couldn't understand their language yet I could somehow read their thoughts, their faces: 'Who's going to survive? This might be my last Christmas.'"

At the end of the Mass, everybody scratched his name with charcoal into the white marl walls of the cave. This turned out to be a farewell message to Maastricht and the world, for they could not foresee that they would have to leave so soon.

The next day they left for Bastogne, to fight the last convulsion of the German war power. Dobrzinsky and many of the other men would never return. At that time, about

800 soldiers were stationed in Maastricht. Many of them didn't survive.

The German attack was successful in the beginning. But after the element of surprise had been overcome, the opportunity for the Germans to break through to the sea was lost. Eisenhower concentrated first on preventing them from broadening the break in his lines and then on blunting the point of their advance.

The Battle of the Bulge cost the United States 77,000 casualties and delayed Eisenhower's offensive, but it exhausted the German's last reserves. The Allies pressed forward to the Rhine.

Thereafter, another German city fell almost daily. With the Russians racing westward against a crumbling resistance, the end was finally in sight. In April, American and Russian forces made contact at the Elbe River. A few days later, with Russian shells reducing his capital to rubble, Hitler, by then insane, took his life in his Berlin air raid shelter. On May 8, V-E Day was celebrated.

The Mass in the marl cave has since been celebrated every Christmas Eve to remember the brave men who gave their lives for freedom. The charcoaled names are a true symbol of everything that is worth fighting for, an everlasting memory of the horrors of war. Christmas is a time of peace and rekindling. Let's hope the Christmas spirit will last forever in the hearts of mankind.

Christmas Eve Mass will again be celebrated this year at the cave Dec. 24 at 7:30 p.m. Seats are allotted by selling tickets, but the event will probably be sold out by press time. For more information call the 254th Base Support Bn. Public Affairs Office at DSN 360-7331.

Van Heel wrote this story in 1987 while working in the Schinnen Public Affairs Office and it was first published in the Heraut.

Richardson's Remarks

We are fortunate to live and work in the tri-border community because it offers valuable, cultural experiences. Our children also receive many of the rewards of this community through schools including AFNorth International School where the classrooms have an international enrollment that encourages diversity that enriches their education. But our input is needed to determine how well our schools carry out their mission to educate our children. Through constructive evaluation, we can provide valuable information to improve the quality of our schools.



Lt. Col. Richard S. Richardson
254th BSB Commander

Between November 1, 2004 and February 28, 2005, Department of Defense Education Activity or DODEA is hosting a Customer Satisfaction Survey for sponsors to complete. It is important for every parent with a school-age child or teen enrolled in a DoDDS school to take a few minutes of their time to complete this survey. Every survey provides input on both a local and department wide bases as to the delivery and quality of education provided by Department of Defense schools to our children. The more surveys completed the more valid the survey becomes. I encourage each and every sponsor to go to the website, www.dodea.edu, click on the large box with a checkmark and complete the survey. If you have children enrolled in both elementary and high school, repeat the process for each child.

Please to take a few moments of your valuable time to fill out the survey. Our children depend on us to contribute and improve their quality education.

From January 24 to March 4, all 4-8 grade students in Department of Defense schools are scheduled to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly known as the Nation's Report Card. NAEP is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education Activity (DoDEA) and is designed to test what students know and can do in subjects commonly taught in school. Students from every state will take NAEP tests. Results from this test will be used to help the Department of Defense maintain high quality schools for military dependents.

Education to be tested

The 2005 NAEP tests are in reading, mathematics, and science with students tested in one subject for no more than 90 minutes. Results are reported for DoDEA as a whole. Results for individual students or schools are not reported. A child's grades in school are not be affected by the test.

NAEP has developed a demonstration booklet that contains samples of reading, mathematics, and science questions, as well as background questions that students are asked. To see the booklet, contact any school principal. For more information about NAEP, please visit its website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>.

How to be safe at holiday parties and while motorcycling on icy roads

By W.M. Vergeer

Safe Christmas Partying

The Christmas and New Year holidays are just around the corner, and parties are being planned.

You are responsible for the safety and behavior of your guests and courts are increasingly placing responsibility on hosts at events where alcohol is available.

Plan ahead: Choose activities wisely; Provide non-alcoholic beverages and serve food; Have guests take a cab, stay overnight, or have a designated driver; Stop serving alcohol a few hours before the end

of the party; Stay sober and act as bartender; and be sure everyone is of legal drinking age.

When you are a party guest: Keep your drink with you at all times and don't let others sip from your drink; Stay with a group of people you trust; Don't drink from open containers; Don't take any pills.

Be careful with a punch bowl. Open containers are an easy target for anyone to add something unhealthy. If you feel "weird," develop a headache, or feel very tired, get help right away. Have a cell

phone with you and know emergency numbers. Let someone know where you are.

Always have a designated driver. *Riding motorcycles on icy roads*

The best way to deal with ice when riding a motorcycle is to avoid it in the first place.

Just because the sun is out, and the roads have thawed, it doesn't mean there is no ice. A good indicator of a slippery road is if it looks shiny. Stick to the areas that are not reflecting light and you should be okay. Black ice usually looks like a wet road. It usually occurs when

a late evening shower is followed by clearing skies and a frost. It's tough to spot and very slippery. Even if the road appears generally clear, there may be colder frost hollows. Bridges are often frosty when the rest of the road is clear.

Another problem to worry about is car drivers who haven't cleared the windshield and can't see you; and car drivers who have no idea of your stability problems on slippery surfaces.

If you think you're about to hit ice, try to stay loose on the bike. Sit forward on the seat, grip the

tank with your knees, brace your back and keep your elbows loose to keep your weight off the bars. If the bike does twitch, and quite likely it will, let it get on with it - normally it will sort itself out. Trying to fight the wobble will normally make things worse.

The most important thing on ice is not to touch the brakes. It's a very strong instinct to overcome, but hit the front brake and you are likely to end up in a big heap. Take it easy out there, and drive to arrive!

Vergeer is a safety specialist at 254th BSB.

254th BSB Calendar

The Prime Time Lounge is on Daumerie Caserne. The PTL meal operation is closed, reopens Jan. 5, for lunch only, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., for a trial period. The PTL bar area is open until Dec. 23; closed Dec. 24-Jan. 4; open Jan. 5, Wednesdays-Fridays, at 5 p.m.; and Saturdays-Sundays, at 7 p.m. Upcoming events: Fridays are Karaoke Nights; Every second Saturday is Country Night, including Jan. 8; The Super Bowl party is Feb. 6, 8 p.m. Info: DSN 361-5540 or 068 27-5540.

Take the Train goes to the Christmas Market in Brussels Dec. 17, meet at ACS 8:30 a.m. Sign up, DSN 423-4332.

Rendezvous with French Language, Dec. 21, 9:30 a.m.-noon, WEB office, Hotel Maisières.

Holiday hours

Most MWR facilities are closed Dec. 24-Jan. 3, return to normal hours Jan. 4, unless noted. A list of operating hours is at www.80asg.army.mil and www.shapeonline.net.

SHAPE Bowling and Pizza Bowl - DSN 423-5696, 065 44-5696. Closed Dec. 24-26, 31 and Jan. 1-2; Open for bowling Dec. 27-30, noon-11 p.m.; Snack bar open Dec. 27-30, noon-8 p.m.; Cinema is closed until January 6.

SHAPE Athletics Program - DSN 423-5325, 065 44-5325 - Main Gym: Closed Dec. 24-25, 31 and Jan. 1; Open Dec. 26-30 and Jan. 2-3, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Indoor

Pool: Closed Dec. 24-25, 31 and Jan. 1; Open Dec. 26-30 and Jan. 2-3, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Green Gym: Closed Dec. 24-25, 31 and Jan. 1; Open Dec. 26-30 and Jan. 2-3, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

SHAPE Officers Club - DSN 423-4133, CIV 06544.41.33 Closed Dec. 24-Dec. 30, and Jan. 1-3. Open Dec. 31 for New Year's Eve party.

International Community Club - DSN 423-5129. Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 3, Reopens Jan. 4.

Silver Spoon / HQ Cafeteria, DSN 423-5114, or 065 44-5114 - Closed Dec. 24-Jan 3; Reopens Jan. 4.

Sports Shop, 065 44-5622 - Open Dec. 24 until 4 p.m.; Closed Dec. 25-Jan 10. Reopens Jan. 11.

Rationed Items Store, DSN 423-5628 - Closed Dec. 25-29 and Jan 1. Reopens Jan. 5.

Chièvres Boarding Kennel, DSN 361-5436 or 068 27-5436 - Open Dec. 24 8:30 a.m.-noon, Dec. 26 and Jan. 1 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., and Dec. 27-30 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Closed Dec. 25 and 31. Arrangements for drop off may be made during the holidays.

AAFES PX, Chièvres Air Base, DSN 361-5100 (PX) or DSN 361-5302 (PXtra.) or 068 27-5100/5302. Open Dec. 1-23, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Dec. 24, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Dec. 26-31 and Jan. 1, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. All AAFES facilities are closed Dec. 25.

Commissary, Chièvres Air Base,

DSN 361-5671 or 068 27-5671 - Open Dec. 24 until 4 p.m.; Open Dec. 20 and 27; Closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1.

Benelux Finance Office on SHAPE, DSN 423-4687 or 065 44-4687 - Open: Dec. 20-22, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Dec. 23, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Closed Dec. 24-27. Open Dec. 28, noon-5 p.m. Closed Dec. 29. Open Dec. 30, noon-5 p.m. Closed Dec. 31-Jan. 3. Disbursing Section emergency number, Staff Duty, 0472 43-7939.

Andrews Federal Credit Union, Chièvres Air Base, DSN 361-5809 or 068 65-6680 - Closed Dec. 24-25, and Jan 31. Open Dec. 31 until 1 p.m.

SATO Travel holiday hours - When the SATO office is closed, emergency service is at 0 800 72775. Local hours: Dec. 24, Open 8 a.m.-noon; Dec. 27-28, Closed; - 29 Dec. 29-30, Open 1-5 p.m.; Dec. 31, Open 8 a.m.-noon; Jan. 1-3, Closed. Info: DSN 361-6104.

SHAPE Healthcare Facility, DSN 423-5886 or 065 44 -5886 (Appointments,) DSN 423-5981 or 065 44-5981 (Pharmacy) - Open Dec 24-Jan 3, 8-10 a.m. only; Closed Dec 25 and Jan 1.

The following facilities are closed Dec. 24-Jan. 3: Army Community Service, USAF Family Support Center, SHAPE Entertainment Centre, Child and Youth Services, Child Development Center, School Age Services, Lan-

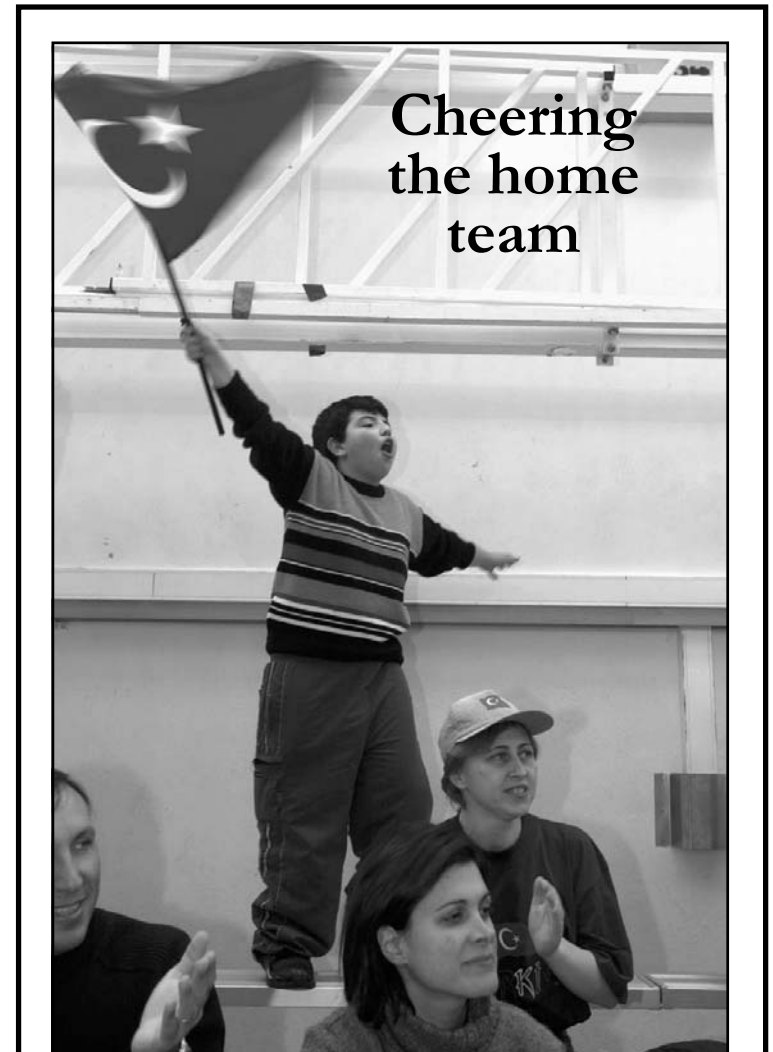


PHOTO: Rick Haverinen

Cagri Oztas, 12, constantly waved the Turkish flag and cheered as his national team played the Czech Republic Dec. 4 at the SHAPE Main Gym during the 41st International Basketball Tournament. His enthusiasm was rewarded as Turkey won this game 74-69. The tournament championship was later won by the U.S.A. defeating Italy 107-70.

guage Centre, Chièvres Community Activity Center, Chièvres Fitness Center, Chièvres Library, Arts and Crafts Centre reopens Jan 5,

Trips and Tours, Outdoor Recreation, International Library, Cinema reopens Jan. 6, Auto Skills Centre reopens Jan. 4.

SHAPE and Chièvres Community Calendar

ACS - Information Desk now located in NSA Building 4, third floor; Metro Madness class Jan. 7, 9:25 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; Toddler Play Group closed Dec. 15-Jan. 10; starting Jan. 11, Play Group meets Tuesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m.-noon, CYS multipurpose room, call 02 717-9684; Sign up or info: 02 717-9783.

NSA Chapel Protestant Worship, Sundays, 10:45 a.m.; Gospel Service, Sundays, 12:30 p.m.; Gospel Sunday School, 11 a.m., NSA Conference Room; Sunday School for all ages every Sunday 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Men of the Chapel meet the first Saturday each month at 9 a.m., NSA Chapel; Protestant Women of the Chapel study, Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m., Fellowship Hall; special Christmas ecumenical celebration, Dec. 19, 10:30 a.m. Info: 02 717-9708.

Outdoor Recreation Trips Cologne Christmas Market Dec. 18, 7:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m., \$29 adults, \$25 children. Sign up of info: Leon Dillien, 474 68 35 44 or 02 717-9775.

Three Star Lounge Hours: Thursday 7 p.m.-midnight, Friday 5 p.m.-1 a.m., Saturday 7 p.m.-1 a.m., Sunday 7-11 p.m.; Movie Night every Thursday, 7:15 p.m. with free popcorn and half price pizza in Jan.; Pool Tournament Dec. 17, 8 p.m.; FRG Children's Christmas Party Dec. 18, 4 p.m.; New Year's Eve party Dec. 31, 9 p.m., tickets available at NSA Finance and 3 Star Lounge, \$15 couple, \$10 single; Right Arm Night Jan. 7, 5 p.m., free wings while they last; Dart Tournament Jan. 14, 9 p.m.; Karaoke Jan. 15, 9 p.m.; Pool Tournament Jan. 21, 9 p.m.; Seafood Night Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m., \$15 (purchase by Jan. 10); Country Western Night Jan. 28. Info: 02 717-9732 or 9639.

Multi-Craft Center Open Wednesday-Thursday 2-9 p.m., Friday 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday-Sunday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; framing

classes Thursdays, 2-6 p.m., \$30; jewelry making Wednesdays, 6 p.m., \$12; Brussels prints and tapestries for purchase, \$15-\$63; engraving and art restoration services available; basic adult ceramics Saturdays, \$30; children ceramics Saturdays, \$20; children's ceramics birthday parties; wood shop power tools classes by appointment, \$11; motorcycle classes Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m., six weeks, \$45; auto craft classes Thursdays, 7-9 p.m., \$25; winter vehicle checks by appointment, \$30. Sign up or info: 02 717-9629.

Sports and Fitness Adult basketball league, Mondays and Wednesdays Jan. 19-March 25; ongoing, self-paced Run For Life program, patches awarded for 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 750 and 1000 miles; ongoing individual MEDEX training. Info: 02 717-9667.

Child and Youth Services Winter camp program Dec. 20-23 for SAS and middle school youth, 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m.; Jan. 22, middle school dance, 3 Star Lounge. Info: 02 717-9649.

BOSS The Brussels Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) program is calling all single Armed Forces men and women. BOSS aims to improve the overall quality of life for the single soldier through planning recreation and leisure activities and volunteering in the community. Info: 02 707-5343 or email Edward.Garcia@benelux.army.mil.

Installation Volunteer Coordinator Help is needed for the following volunteer positions: NSA Fitness Center receptionist and administrative support, ACS Financial Readiness Program instructor, ACS AFAP Conference Assistant, and International Dinner Committee Chair. Info: 02 717-9679.

Holiday hours

AAFES - NSA Building 2, Shoppette: 02

717-9789, Open Dec. 24, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Food Court, 02 717-9782, Open Dec. 24 and 31, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Both Shoppette and Food Court close Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. Barber Shop, 02 717 9619, Closed Mondays and Tuesdays. Call for details.

Andrews Federal Credit Union - NSA Building 2, 02 721-9905, Closed Dec. 24-26, Open Dec. 27-30. Closing Dec. 31, 1 p.m. Closed Jan. 1-2. Reopens Jan. 3.

APO - NSA Building 2, 02 717-9701, Closed Sat and Sun. Open Dec. 24 and 31.

Army Community Service - NSA Building 4, 02 717-9783, Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 3. Reopens Jan. 4, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Arts and Crafts Center - NSA Building 1, 02 717-9629, Closed Dec. 20 Dec.-Jan. 5. Reopens Jan. 6.

Auto Crafts Shop - NSA Building 1, 02 717-9743, Closed Dec. 24-28. Open Dec. 29-30. Closed Dec. 31-Jan 4. Reopens Jan. 5.

Brussels American School - NSA Sterrebeek, 02 717-9552, Closed Dec. 20-Jan. 2. Reopens Jan. 3.

Chapel - NSA Building 2, 02 717-9677, Closed Dec. 27. Open Dec. 20 Dec.-Jan. 2, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Child and Youth Services - NSA Building 3, 02 717-9651, Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2. Reopens Jan. 3.

Consignment Shop - NSA Building 1, 02 717-9724, Closed Dec. 18- Jan. 4.

Education Center - NSA Building 1, 02 717-9704, Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 3. Reopens Jan. 4.

Finance Office - NSA Building 2, 02 717-9732, Open Dec. 20-23 Dec, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Closed Dec. 24-27; Open Dec. 28-30, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Closed Dec. 31 and Jan. 1-3. Reopens Jan. 4.

Fitness Center - NSA Building 3, 02 717-9667, Open Dec. 24, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Closed Dec. 25; Open Dec. 26-29, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Closed Dec. 30-Jan. 1; Open Jan. 2-3, 10

a.m.-4 p.m. Normal hours return Jan. 4.

Housing Office - NSA Building 4, 02 717-9791; Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 3. Reopens Jan. 4.

Library - NSA Building 4, 02 717-9791, Closed Dec. 24-27 Dec.; Open Dec. 28-29, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Closed Dec. 30-31 and Jan. 1; Open Jan. 2, noon-5 p.m. Story time postponed until further notice. Info: 02 717-9705.

NATO Dental Clinic - NSA Sterrebeek, 02 717-9501, Open Dec. 20 until noon; Open Dec. 21-22; Open Dec. 23 until noon; Closed Dec. 24-26; Open Dec. 30 until noon; Closed Dec. 31-Jan. 2; Reopens Jan. 3.

NATO Health Clinic - NSA Sterrebeek, 02 717-9521, Open Dec. 17 morning by appointment only; Closed Dec. 18-19, Dec. 30-Jan. 2; Open Dec. 20-23 and 27-29, 8 a.m.-noon for patient acute care by appointment only; Reopens Jan. 3.

Northern Law Center - NSA Building 4, 065 44-4868, At NSA on Tuesdays, by appointment only. Open Dec. 21; Closed Dec. 22-Jan. 3; Reopens Jan. 4.

NSC 39th Signal Bn. - NSA Building 3, 02 717-9773, Closed Dec. 24-26 and Dec. 31-Jan. 2; Reopens Jan. 3.

Safety Office and Driver Testing - NSA Building 3, 02 717-9759; Closed Dec. 10-Jan. 9; Reopens Jan. 10. For drivers testing emergencies, call Ms. Brulez at SHAPE 065 443 603.

Three-Star Lounge - NSA Building 1, 02 717-9822, Closed Dec. 20-30; Open Dec. 31 at 9 p.m. for the New Year's Eve party.

Transportation Office - NSA Building 3, 02 717-9702, TMP/Household Goods/Supply closed Dec. 24-Jan. 3; Reopening Jan. 4.

SATO Travel - Closed Dec. 24-26, reopening Dec. 27-28; Closed Dec. 29-Jan. 3; Reopens Jan. 4.

For more information about events happening in the Brussels community, visit www.brussels.army.mil.

254th BSB Local Calendar

Marechaussee checks quarters - The Marechaussee knows that during holiday periods, when homes are empty, they are vulnerable to vandalism and burglary. There are things you can do to make it less obvious that you are on holiday. The Marechaussee has put together a leaflet in English giving tips for holiday planning. Ask for one. The Marechaussee can also check quarters while you are on vacation. Stop by the Provost Marshal Office. This stop could be the most important one you make on your vacation. The Marechaussee can also be seen every Thursday at the PMO in Schinnen.

A finding employment workshop is Dec. 21 and Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25 at ACS, 10 a.m.-noon. For hands-on Resumix/Resumes assistance workshops are scheduled for Dec. 21 and Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25 at ACS Resource Center, 2-4 p.m. Sign up at ACS or call DSN 360-7500 or 046 443-7500.

The Child Development Center Parents Advisory Council meets Jan. 19, 5-6 p.m., at the CDC.

Youth Services Christmas party is Dec. 17, 4-5:30 p.m., at the Youth Service Building H-603, Joint Forces Command (JFC) Brunssum. Info: DSN 364-3008 or 31 45 26-3008.

Conserve energy - When away from work or home for a time, make sure to turn down your thermostat to 15 degrees Celsius. Take meter readings at least once a month so unwanted billing surprises are avoided.

The housing manual has a lot of helpful information which will answer most questions. Pick up your copy at the Housing Office in Schinnen.

Overseas housing allowances survey - In December, the survey to establish the Housing Allowances is sent out to a random number of service members. The better the information that is being input, the better the

allowances are. Last year the Miscellaneous Initial Housing Allowance dropped because of poor information and the low number of participants who returned the survey. Info: DSN 360-7345 or 046 443-7345.

New IACS registration hours - Starting January, the 254th BSB Provost Marshal administration section and IACS registration are closed daily, noon-1 p.m. IACS registration hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-noon, and 1-4 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-noon; and closed Saturday-Sunday. Info: Ben Dols, DSN 360-7322 or 31 46 443-7322.

AFNorth International Club Charity Committee sells Rousseau chocolates as a fundraiser through Dec. 24, available at Schinnen Thrift Shop, Wednesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., and Sunday noon-3 p.m. Other sale locations are AFNorth International School (see Ms. Frawley) and JFC Brunssum U.K. Thrift Shop.

Central Texas College AFNorth offers next term - Early Childhood, Children with Special Needs; and Criminal Justice, Criminal Investigations. Term III registration is Jan. 3-17, class dates are Jan. 17-March 11. Contact the CTC field representative at Treebeek Education Center to enroll. Info: DSN 364-6005 or 31 455 63-6005.

Soldiers interested in the Green to Gold Program submit applications available at Treebeek Education Center administration office. The education counselors are available to assist. This is an opportunity for Soldiers to complete their college education and become a commissioned officer. Submission dates are now through Apr. 1. Info: Tom Kruse, DSN 364-6011/6041 or 31 45 563-6011/6041.

254th BSB Community News - If you would like to receive an electronic version of the 254th Base Support Bn. Tri-Border News, Notes and the 254th BSB Commu-

nity Calendar of Events, please email laurri.garcia@benelux.army.mil.

Holiday hours

Schinnen Commissary - Dec. 20-23, and Dec. 27-30, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Christmas Eve, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and New Years Eve, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Closed Dec. 25-26, and Jan. 1.

Schinnen mailroom - Open Dec. 18, 1-3 p.m., and Christmas Eve, 1-3 p.m. Closed Dec. 25, 31 and Jan. 1.

Schinnen Community Bank - Open through Dec. 23, and Dec. 28-30; Dec. 31, 9 a.m.-noon; Closed Dec. 24-25, and Jan. 1.

Andrews Federal Credit Union - Closed Dec. 24-25 and Jan. 1. Open Dec. 31, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Army Community Service - Closed Dec. 20, Dec. 24-31, and Jan. 1-2. Open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Auto Hobby Shop, JFC Brunssum - Open: Wednesday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Thursday, 1-9 p.m.; Friday, noon-8 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Closed Dec. 20, 27-31 and Jan 1-2. Open Dec. 21, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Dec. 22, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Dec. 23, noon-8 p.m.

Bowling Center - Closed: Dec. 20-21, 24-25, 27-28, 31. Jan. 1. Open: Dec. 22, 26, 29 and Jan. 2, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Dec. 23, 30, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Teen Center - Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2; Open Dec. 20-23, 1-6 p.m.

CYS Central Enrollment and Registration, Treebeek - Closed: Dec. 24-26, Dec. 31 and Jan 1-2. Open Dec. 20-23, 27-30, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

CDC/SAS Facility - Closed: Dec. 24 - Jan. 1-2. Open: Dec. 20-23, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

Youth Services - Closed: Dec. 24-Jan 2. Open: Dec. 20-23, 1-6 p.m.

Multi-Arts and Crafts Center, JFC Brunssum - Open Dec. 19, 1-5 p.m. Open regular hours through Dec. 21. Closed: Dec. 22-Jan. 10, with the exception of framing pick-up available Dec. 22 only.

Library, JFC Brunssum - Open: Tuesday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Closed: Dec. 20, 24-31 and Jan. 1- 2. Open: Dec. 21-22, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. and Dec. 23, 10 a.m.-noon.

AAFES PX - Open: Dec. 17-23, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Dec. 24, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Dec. 26-31, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. and Jan. 1, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. All AAFES facilities are closed Dec. 25.

DMWR Administration offices, including VAT Office - Closed: Dec. 24-26 and Dec. 31; Jan. 1-2. Open: Dec. 20-23 and Dec. 27-30, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

SATO Travel - Closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. Open Dec. 24 and Dec. 31, 8 a.m.-noon.

Eligibility rules for school lunches change

New Guidelines qualify more families for free/reduced lunch: For the first time in nearly 25 years, the eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches in Department of Defense (DoD) schools will be calculated for families living on the economy without including their housing allowance as income. This should greatly increase the number of children eligible to receive reduced-price or free lunches at school. The new policy went into effect in October. Some children living off the installation may find they now qualify for reduced-price lunches, and those already eligible for the reduced prices may now qualify for free lunches. The policy applies only to those DoD civilian and military dependent children living in civilian housing overseas. There is no change in the policy for the chil-

dren of families living in military housing, and no change for students at DoD schools in the United States. Families interested in seeing if their eligibility has changed should contact their school liaison officer. You will need to provide a copy of your most recent Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) when you apply under the new provisions. You can pick up a new application at the school or at Schinnen with Marilyn Carver, School Liaison Officer, 254th BSB, HQ Building #8, Room 216. DoD signed the first agreement with the USDA in 1980 allowing its schools to participate in the National School Lunch Program. This change in eligibility criteria marks the first major revision in that agreement. This change will help many of our families, particularly those living on the economy. Please take advantage of this benefit.

Civilians register for emergency

HEIDELBERG, Germany - Nearly one quarter of the Department of the Army civilian employees in Europe have their emergency data information placed on a confidential, automated data base system created by DA, but what about the rest? There were many lessons learned following the September 11 terrorist attacks. One was the necessity for commanders to have quick access to accurate contact information that identifies family members and designated others in the wake of a crisis.

Reports from DA indicate only about one quarter of the civilians in Europe are currently registered in this database. Every civilian employee is responsible for entering accurate emergency contact data in the database system.

The emergency data provided will be stored and made available only to those authorized individuals who will be directly involved in the actual process of notification or assisting with the necessary documents in the event of injury or death.

Information on how to register can be accessed through the Civilian Personnel directorate website at <http://www.per.hqusaureur.army.mil/cpd>

Click on the box labeled "Register Now" to go directly to the database.

Meteor-Heraut

Deadline and Publication Dates

Copy due (noon)	Print Date	Copy due (noon)	Print Date	Copy due (noon)	Print Date	Copy due (noon)	Print Date
Jan. 3	Jan. 14	Jan. 31	Feb. 11	Feb. 28	March 11	March 28	April 8
Jan. 14	Jan. 28	Feb. 14	Feb. 25	March 14	March 25	April 11	April 22

About Us

Meteor-Heraut

The *Meteor-Heraut* is the authorized unofficial Army newspaper published under AR 360-1 for 80th Area Support Group personnel. Editorial content is provided by the 80th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office and the 254th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office. Opinions expressed are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 80th Area Support Group. The *Meteor-Heraut* is published twice per month. Circulation is 3,000. Our mailing address is Meteor-Heraut, HQ 80th ASG, Unit 21419, Public Affairs Office, APO AE 09708. Telephone: DSN 361-5419; fax: DSN 361-5106; civilian telephone prefix: 068-27-5419. The country code for Belgium is 0032. Email address: meteor@benelux.army.mil

Policy

- We encourage letters to the editor, but they must be signed. We will consider withholding the name of the author upon request. Letters regarding an issue should contribute to informational interest.
- We reserve the right to edit all material for style, to fit available space, to resolve libel, safety or force protection issues and to correct grammar.
- Articles in plain text and separate photographic files may be submitted but publication depends upon the judgment of the editor. All submissions should be in electronic form as plain text. We cannot process information in documents such as PowerPoint, Excel or Acrobat.
- Event announcements must use civilian dates and times. Spell out acronyms and include a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. We cannot reproduce prepared flyers in the Meteor-Heraut.

Advertising

- Messages from readers from profit and non-profit organizations which involve money exchange constitutes advertising.
- Neither the *Meteor-Heraut* staff nor other public affairs personnel can accept advertising requests.
- The appearance of advertising, including inserts, does not constitute endorsement of the products or services offered. Everything advertised must be available for purchase, use or patronage, without discrimination.

- Any gambling or lottery requiring payment for chance cannot be advertised as stated in 18 U.S.C. 1302.

Deadline

Copy and photographs are due by noon 10 calendar days before publication date.

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St. Nick takes gifts to kids in hospital



PHOTO: J.D. Hardesty

St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children, makes a new friend Dec. 6 during a visit to La Madeleine hospital in Ath, Belgium.

By J.D. Hardesty

St.

Nicholas, the patron saint of children, has spread gift-giving for more than 1,700 years.

And four years in a row now, a home-spun incarnation of St. Nicholas, flanked by members of local U.S. military organizations, has walked down the corridors of the La Madeleine hospital in Ath, Belgium, to cheer up children who might wish to be anywhere else during the holidays.

"Bon jour, St. Nicholas," could be heard from adult passers-by as the man in red cloak, mitre, jeweled gloves and staff, walked through the hospital Dec. 6 and into the children's ward.

Sponsored by the 80th Area Support Group, 10 children, ranging from four months to 12 years in age, received gifts from their patron saint.

Gregoire, 5 years old, kept his eyes peering around the corner and down the hall for a glimpse of St. Nicholas. A smile spread across his face as he recognized his soon-to-be visitor walking toward his room.

As fast as his eyes brightened with recognition, he darted back into his room and jumped into bed,

to await his gift-giver's arrival.

He had already drawn a picture to give St. Nicholas.

As St. Nicholas worked his way from room to room in the children's ward, giving presents to other kids, Gregoire's curiosity drew him back to the activity in the hallway. He peered out of his room, watching St. Nicholas' every move, then retreated into his room each time their eyes met.

This was the first time many of the younger children had seen St. Nicholas, and the U.S. Soldier wearing the beard and red cape was also having a brand new thrill, finding the encounter with the children, "...way too cool."

"I think I'll always remember the picture the little boy gave me," said French-speaking Staff Sgt. Edward Hoffman, a personnel specialist with the 80th ASG. "It was interesting to converse with the children and put a smile on their faces."

In return, the kids made Hoffman's face beam without effort. He posed for pictures, held babies and shared the spotlight with the other Soldiers who became members of the local Belgian community because of their visit.

As St. Nick and his entourage left the children's ward, nurses called out grateful farewells that echoed down the hallway, "Merci, Saint Nicholas. Merci!"

Santa Claus comes to town, makes list, checks twice



PHOTO: Sylvia Bowron

Mrs. Claus brings the first child in line, Isabella Ryan, 3 years old, to see Santa at the Sports Center in Schinnen during the Dec. 9 tree lighting ceremony.



PHOTO: Rick Haverinen

Kids strutted right along with Santa on his way to the PX after he arrived on Chièvres Air Base Dec. 3.



PHOTO: Dorothy Nevins

Jamie Maxwell, 6 years old, could have petitioned Santa for her missing two front teeth during her Dec. 3 visit with him at Brussels American School.

Bulge 60th Anniversary events

Friday, Dec. 17 – Houffalize, Belgium: 11 a.m., Wreath laying ceremony at Junction Memorial and Monument in downtown Houffalize. *La Roche en Ardennes, Belgium:* 2:30 p.m., Wreath laying ceremony at the U.S. Memorial and Monument honoring civilian war victims, for information call 084 41-1188; 8 p.m., concert by the 76th Army Band at the church in La Roche.

Saturday, Dec. 18 – Bastogne, Belgium: 8:30 a.m., departure of the historical walk from the Café l'Europa for 6, 12 or 20 kilometer routes; 10 a.m., Patriotic pageant departs Bastogne City Hall to walk to ceremonies at the Patton Monument in Place Merceny, then to the McAuliffe Monument in the town square; 4 p.m., Arming of the Royal Guard and ceremony at the Mardasson Memorial; 4:45 p.m., Ceremony of "Nuts!" at city hall, McAuliffe's famous rebuke to a Nazi offer to surrender is remembered by hurling bags of walnuts from the city hall balcony; 5 p.m., Historical re-enactment of the Battle of the Bulge through a sound and light show in downtown Bastogne's darkened streets. **Please note:** The expected heavy

traffic situation in Bastogne may make it difficult to attend both the 4 p.m. ceremony at the Mardasson Memorial and the events immediately following in downtown Bastogne. To avoid frustration, visitors may want to choose which location to be in at that time. *Perlé, Luxembourg:* 10:30 a.m., 76th U.S. Army Band performs in a ceremony. *Martelange, Belgium:* 11 a.m., Wreath laying ceremony.



"I was 20 in 1945 at Bastogne" exhibition runs Dec. 18 through Nov. 30, 2005 in Bastogne. This display with different themes is dedicated to the Battle of Bastogne and open daily, except Mondays, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1, at the Séminaire de Bastogne on

Place en Piconrue 4-6. Entrance fee is Euro 7 per person. Info: 061 24-0961.

Sunday, Dec. 19 – Bastogne, Belgium: 11:30 a.m. and again at noon (weather permitting,) air drop from a period Dakota airplane of parachutists, including several World War II veterans, at Mardasson Memorial; 4:45 p.m., over 100 vintage military vehicles and WWII reenactors "Liberty Road" parade through downtown.

Noville, Belgium (near Bastogne): 10:30 a.m., Commemorative ceremony. *Malmedy, Belgium:* 2:30 p.m., Ceremony at Baugnez Memorial, near the site of the Malmedy massacre.

For more information call 80th ASG PAO, DSN 361-5419.

Christmas Chapel Services

Catholic Services at SHAPE Chapel - Dec. 24, 2 p.m., Children's Mass; 9:30 p.m., Christmas Vigil; Dec. 25, no services; Dec. 26, Regular Sunday Eucharist; Dec. 31, 6 p.m., Vigil Mass.

Protestant Services at SHAPE Chapel - Dec. 24, 6-7:30 p.m., followed by a reception in the fellowship hall; Dec. 25, 10 a.m., Christmas Brunch, for single soldiers and civilians, and people staying in the hotel.

Anglican Services at SHAPE East Chapel - Dec. 24, 7:30 p.m., Midnight Mass; Dec. 25, 10:15 a.m., Christmas Day Mass.

Protestant Services at Daumerie Caserne - Dec. 24, 7 p.m., Candlelight Service; Dec. 26, Regular Sunday Services.

NSA Brussels - Dec. 24, 7 p.m., Combined Candlelight Service.

AFNorth Chapel Services, all held in East Chapel

Catholic: Dec. 24, 11 p.m., U.S. and Canadian Midnight Mass; Dec. 25, 11 a.m., U.S. and Canadian Christmas Mass; Dec. 26, 11 a.m., Regular Service.

Protestant: Dec. 24, 7 p.m., U.S. and Canadian Candlelight Service; Dec. 26, 9:30 a.m., U.S. and Canadian Regular Service.

For more information about services, call DSN 361-5381 or 068 27-5381.

